

Malines, 4th January 1814

Curate of Mouscron near Courtrai

My very dear Nephew,

I thank you most sincerely for the prayers which you have offered for me for the new year and for the prayers that you offer to heaven for my salvation: I have the honour of doing the same for you and to assure you that you are always on my paten when I have the joy of going to the altar, which is now daily, thanks to the Lord, as my health in considerably improved.

I truly hope, my very dear nephew, that the affairs of the Church will soon improve and that the affairs of State will become calm. The extraordinary events which we are beginning to hear about seem to suggest that they will. A little more patience and a doubling of prayers will produce this double peace.

The news of the death of my great-nephew Bernard upset me somewhat at first, but considering the good cause for which he suffered and the spirit of penitence which accompanied him I believe I see him in Paradise praying for us. We had a solemn Mass for him here at which the whole seminary was present.

Since reading several pamphlets about matters in Ghent I am convinced that truth is on your side, not only by the practice which I have always upheld, but also by speculation. For the rest let it be said between the two of us vexatio dat intellectum¹. I have been in the situation of refusing to allow the government to participate in these discussions. What they were demanding seemed to me to be illicit, and my colleague was of the same mind; after many disputes and citations of French usages we persisted in our refusal. We had no doubt that we going to be asked to resign, but Mgr de Prat intervened with his powerful protection and the matter remained there. A foreign Diocese was also under discussion. I will tell you everything at the right moment.

I have the honour to be, with particular affection,

My very dear nephew,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

JG Huleu

¹ Hardship improves the understanding.